

RHS

R I S H W O R T H

U R B A N S A N I T A R Y D I S T R I C T.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT

for the Year 1902.

Gentlemen,

I respectfully beg to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1902.

During the year there have been two epidemics of Infectious Disease, one of Measles, and one of Scarlet Fever. The first epidemic commenced in April and continued through May into June, when it abated. The epidemic was a rather severe form of Measles, and there were 2 deaths certified as due to this disease. As far as it is possible to estimate, the number of cases, - Measles not being a notifiable infectious disease - was about 40. All parts of the district seem to have been equally affected and owing to the diminished attendance at the Day School, the Schoolmaster recommended closing, to which I agreed. The school was accordingly closed from May 9th. until June 2nd., one week of this period being the customary Whitsuntide holiday. During the closure the School was disinfected and cleaned.

The second epidemic commenced in the beginning of October and continued until the end of the year. There were 21 cases of Scarlet Fever notified in different parts of the District, but more than half of the number occurred at Booth Wood. The disease was of a very mild type and there were no deaths due to it. At my request the first case that was notified from Booth Wood



was removed to the Halifax Borough Hospital by the Council, with the view, as I stated in a special Report I made at the time, to preventing any further spread of the disease in that locality. Unfortunately this preventive measure did not turn out to be as successful as I expected. Careful enquiries as to the source of this epidemic failed, as is often the case in tracing the source of any epidemic of Infectious Disease, to discover any satisfactory origin. I am, however, quite satisfied from careful inspection of all the scholars attending the school at the outset, that the Day School was not the focus of infection, and I ordered the closing of the School, more on account of the very diminished attendance and the financial loss which the Schoolmaster represented to me would result to the already straitened income of the School, than from any idea of checking the spread of the Epidemic. The school was closed for 3 weeks from Oct. 17th. to Nov. 10th. and before re-opening all the rooms were stoved and the walls washed. This is the only epidemic of Scarlet Fever since 1898.

The Birth and Death Rates for last year were, owing to an unfortunate error, calculated wrongly. The estimated population for the district is 915, and the birth and death rates instead of being 22.5 and 18 per 1,000 respectively, as stated in my Report, should have been 27.5 and 20 per 1000. I think that this correction should be duly notified in my Report for this year.

The Births in 1902 numbered 28, an increase of 3 on the births in 1901 and 2 on the average number of births for the last 10 years. This number works out an average of slightly over 31 per 1,000 of estimated population: the highest birth rate with one exception (1896) in the last 10 years.

The Deaths number 14; 6 less than in 1901, and the rate per 1000 is 15.5, the lowest rate for the last 6 years, and in keeping with the low general death rate of the country. Of these 14

deaths, one occurred outside the district in the Halifax Infirmary. Of the 13 deaths within the district 5 were infants under one year of age, 5 were over 50 years of age, and 2 deaths occurred from Measles, under 5 years of age. There were 4 deaths from Tuberculosis, an exceptionally large proportion, but of these, 2 were 59 and 64 years of age respectively, and might be regarded as cases of Senile Tuberculosis, and 2 were 19 and 25 years of age. It is only by educating the people to the great necessity of taking careful precautions to prevent infection when persons are known to be suffering from this disease, and using all means to stop indiscriminate spitting in the factories, work-shops, and public places, that we can lessen the mortality from this disease.

The Water Supply question has, it is to be hoped, been advanced a little further towards something being done to provide a constant supply of good water to those parts of the district that are at present without such supply. During the year a site on the moors above the "Derby" Inn has been prospected for water, trenches have been cut through the clay to the level of the sub-soil water, and the Surveyor employed by the Council has given an opinion that there can be obtained from this source, and from a spring in the immediate vicinity, a supply of water quite sufficient to meet all the needs of the District. The water has been carefully analysed, and is found to be good serviceable water free from organic impurity. At a recent well-attended meeting of the Ratepayers of the District the scheme was adopted, and it is presumed that the work of laying mains etc. and bringing the supply to the houses that suffer more especially from lack of water will be commenced without delay.

The New Factories and Workshops Act of 1901, which I referred to in my last report, as likely to entail extra work upon the

Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector, does not appear, after careful inspection of the Clauses which District Councils are authorised to maintain, to affect our district to any appreciable extent. Of Workshops and Work-places as so defined under the Act, I can find none that the Act applies especially to. With regard to the provisions of Fire Escapes in Factories employing over 40 hands, I believe all the factories in the district have already complied with the Regulation requirements.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

W. B. MERCER, M.B., D.P.H.,

Med. Off. of Health.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30037220>

